Portland Harbor
CLEANUP NEWSLETTER
May 2007

Portland Harbor Round 2 Report

On February 21st, the Portland Harbor investigation reached a major milestone when the Lower Willamette Group (LWG) submitted the Comprehensive Round 2 Site Characterization Report to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for review. This report compiles all of the available physical, chemical and biological information for the Portland Harbor Superfund site and provides an overview of what the information means.

After the EPA intergovernmental team reviews the report, it will identify remaining data gaps that must be filled in order to proceed with the next steps. Those next steps include assessing the human health risk and the ecological risk, establishing cleanup levels, and identifying preliminary cleanup alternatives that can be evaluated in the Feasibility Study.

Also In This Issue

What are the key parts of the Round 2 Comprehensive Report?

- *Conceptual Site Model Summary* – How the site works. What type of contamination is present, where it comes from, where it goes and how it might come in contact with people or wildlife.
- *Physical Setting* – The characteristics of the river including the type of sediments, water flow and uses of the harbor by people and wildlife.
- *Sources* – The likely sources of chemicals that have impacted the river from the harbor and from upstream.
- *Chemical Distribution* – The chemicals that are found in sediments, groundwater, and surface water.
- *Fate and Transport* – How chemicals move through the environment and where they end up.
- *Preliminary Human Health Risk Evaluation Summary* – What contaminants at the site may pose risks to human health, based on the different ways people use the river.
- *Preliminary Ecological Risk Evaluation Summary* – Potential risks to fish and wildlife, based on how fish and wildlife come into contact with contaminants.
- *Identifying Areas of Potential Concern* – Geographic areas in the river where chemicals in sediment may pose an unacceptable risk to human or ecological health.
- *Data Gaps and Additional Data Needs* – Samples or information still needed about the harbor-wide area and/or for specific areas of potential concern to complete the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.

Can I review the Round 2 Comprehensive Report?

Yes. CD copies of the report will be mailed out by request. To get a copy, contact Judy Smith at *smith.judy@epa.gov* or 503-326-6994.

A copy of the report is available at the reference desk in the St. Johns Library. The volumes and map portfolios of this data-rich report fill a large box.

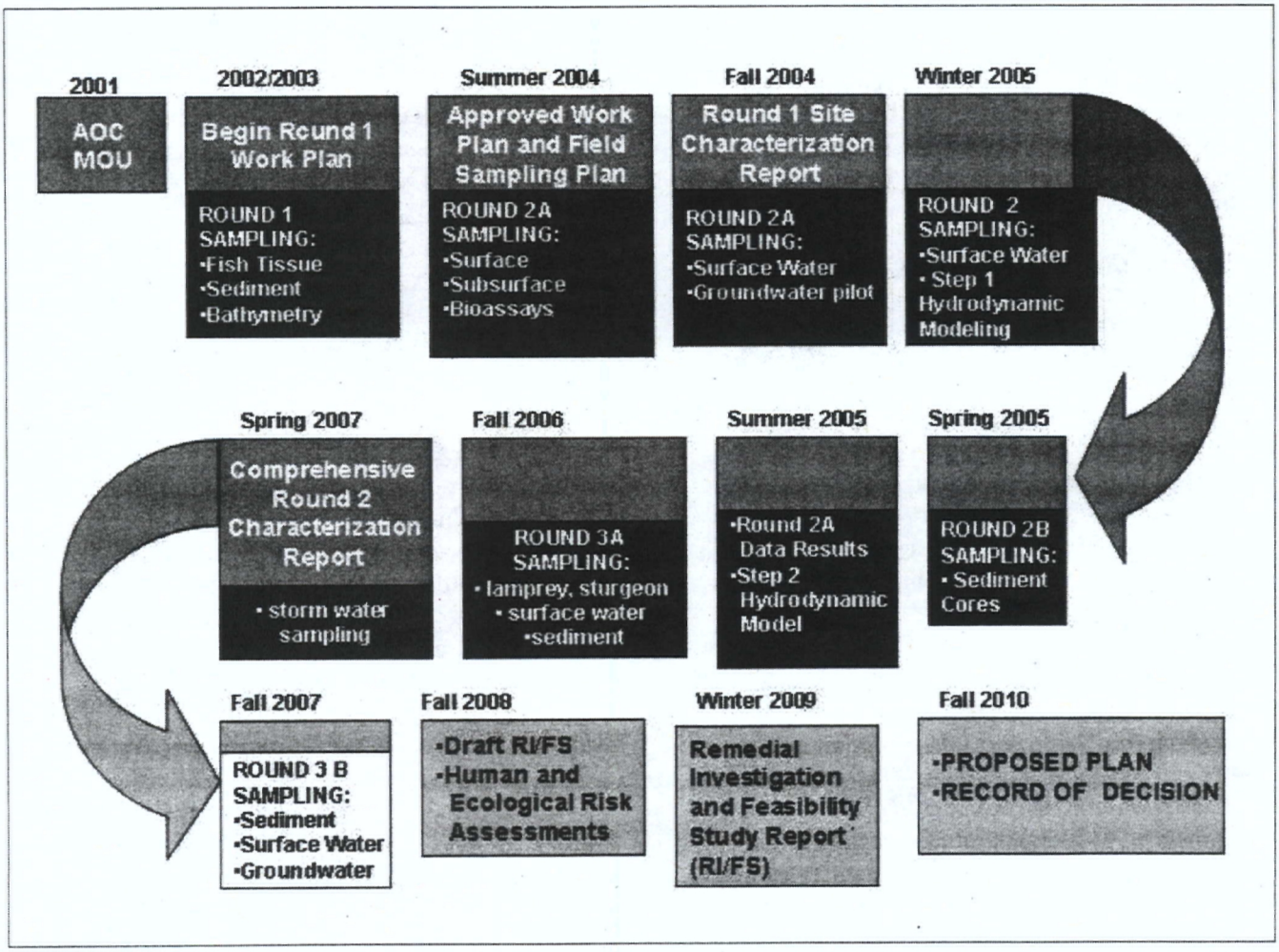
What Are The Next Steps?

The Round 2 Comprehensive Report will be used to identify remaining data gaps. These information needs are expected to be filled by sampling in 2007. These studies are needed to make sure there is an adequate understanding of contamination and site conditions for the Portland Harbor site.

The Round 2 Report will not be revised or finalized. Instead, EPA will use the feedback received on the Round 2 Report to improve the quality and content of the baseline risk assessments, Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study.

The baseline human health and ecological risk assessments are two very important parts of the cleanup planning process, because the main goal of cleanup is to protect people and the environment from risks posed by contamination. The risk assessment process is under way, and the draft risk assessments are scheduled for completion in fall 2008.

Following the completion of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Reports in 2009, EPA will prepare a Proposed Plan for public comment. After public comments are incorporated, a final cleanup remedy will be selected in the Record of Decision by fall 2010.



Harbor-wide Study Updates

This newsletter highlights two Round 3A sampling efforts being completed as part of the Remedial Investigation for the Portland Harbor site. Storm water runoff is an example of physical and chemical sampling that helps us understand how contamination moves within the site. Lamprey and sturgeon sampling are good examples of finding out how contamination affects living organisms within the harbor. The results of these studies will be carefully reviewed for quality and accuracy by EPA and their government and tribal partners.

April Showers Bring May Flowers, and May Bring Data Too!

It is important to understand the effect of storm runoff on contamination in Portland Harbor. However, information has been somewhat limited, since storm water data can only be gathered during wet-weather. A technical team designed a storm water study as part of the Portland Harbor Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). This spring, storm water sampling will help us learn how storm runoff contributes to the chemical burden of the river. Storm water data will be collected by the end of the wet-weather season in May or June of 2007.

The storm water data will be used to evaluate the potential risks for sediment recontamination and impacts to the harbor. The sampling program will also aid understanding of the effect of storm water on contamination in fish and surface water. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will also benefit from this year's storm water sampling by using the data to help identify and control sources of contamination.

Storm water samples are being collected at eleven locations that are representative of certain types of land use within the overall drainage area, such as heavy industrial, major transportation corridors, light industrial, residential and open space. In addition, eleven specific industrial sites with unique or potential chemical sources and two locations that discharge storm water from a mixture of land use zones will be sampled.

This work does not replace or affect the work being completed by the City of Portland to reduce and eliminate overflows from the city storm water drainage system.

Learning About Lamprey and Sturgeon in Portland Harbor

Sturgeon are popular with Willamette River anglers, and lamprey are an important cultural food for many native cultures in the Pacific Northwest. As a result, the Portland Harbor Remedial Investigation is collecting information on how contamination affects lamprey and sturgeon, species that spend part of their life cycles in the Willamette River.

In March 2007, samples of pre-breeding white sturgeon were collected in Portland Harbor. Young sturgeon were selected for this test because they spend more time in the Willamette River than older adult sturgeon, so there is a greater likelihood of a tie between contaminants found in their tissue and contamination from Portland Harbor sediments.

In September and October 2006, *ammocoetes*, the juvenile form of lamprey, were collected from Portland Harbor to see if contamination was present in tissue. Ammocoetes were also collected upstream of the main Portland Harbor study area. Samples were also collected from the Siltez River for laboratory tests to find out what levels of six chemicals are toxic to them. The results are presented in the Round 3 Lamprey Phase 1 Toxicity Testing Report (April 2007).

Ammocoetes from the Siletz River or an alternate site will be collected and tested during spring/ summer 2007 to complete Phase II of the Toxicity Testing to find out if the *ammocoetes'* sensitivity to chemicals is similar to toxicity data for other species. This will help determine if it is appropriate to compare *ammocoete* data to existing toxicity reference values for other species.

After the current data have been analyzed, EPA and DEQ will first see if more data collection is needed to fully understand the effect of Portland Harbor contamination on lamprey and sturgeon.

What information has the LWG gathered and analyzed since the start of the investigation?

- Individual fish and invertebrate samples
- Subsurface sediment chemistry samples
- Surface sediment chemistry samples
- Sediment trend analysis sample points
- Sediment profile images
- Transition zone water samples
- Surface water samples
- Four major annual bathymetry surveys (river bottom mapping) of the lower Willamette River

In addition, surface water and sediment data upstream and downstream of the Portland Harbor Study Area, lamprey tissue, sturgeon tissue and additional surface water and sediment samples within the Study Area have been collected since last fall as part of Round 3 investigation.

Triangle Park Agreement Finalized Between EPA and UP

In December 2006, EPA entered a "Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser Agreement and Order on Consent for Removal Action" (Agreement) with the University of Portland (UP), after taking public comment. The Agreement will facilitate UP's plans to purchase the Triangle Park property at 5828 North Van Houten Place. This planned future purchase is adjacent to property currently owned by McCormick & Baxter, Inc., located at 6900 North Edgewater Avenue in Portland.

Under this Agreement, UP will perform a non-time critical removal action with EPA oversight, in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). The UP has agreed to spend $3 million toward that effort, even though the University has not caused or contributed to the contamination at the site.

The UP is purchasing the Triangle Park property in order to relocate and expand athletic and academic facilities. EPA has determined that this Agreement is in the public interest because the property will be returned to productive reuse. In addition, fish habitat will be restored and public recreation opportunities will be expanded by the construction of a riverfront walkway with public access.

PRP Search – Notice Letter Update

In April 2006, EPA issued notice letters to additional potentially responsible parties (PRPs) and re-noticed parties who had been identified in 2000 but did not participate in the RI/FS. These new PRPs have reached an agreement with the Lower Willamette Group to make an interim payment of RI/FS costs, but there is no agreement for their full participation.

Early Action Updates

GASCO Oversight Report

The Oversight Report for the GASCO Early Removal Action is now available. Removing 15,000 cubic yards of tar at GASCO marked the first time contaminated sediment was dredged from the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The cleanup successfully eliminated a serious source of contamination, but it also presented some challenges. The experience gained from the GASCO project will help EPA minimize short-term impacts during future sediment cleanup actions in the Willamette River.

You can read or download the report from the EPA GASCO website at: ***http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/ph/gasco***. You can also request a copy of the report on CD from Judy Smith at 503-326-6994. A paper copy of the report is available at the reference desk of the St. Johns, Northwest and Main branches of the Multnomah County Library.

continued

GASCO Fine

In November 2006, NW Natural agreed to pay a $32,750 penalty for failing to notify EPA in a timely manner when water quality standards were exceeded in fall 2005, during cleanup of contaminated sediment at the GASCO site. The water quality monitoring requirement was established by EPA to assess short-term impacts to fish and aquatic life. Work was stopped several times in order to take additional measures to protect water quality.

Terminal 4 Project Update

The Port of Portland is designing the cleanup of contaminated sediments at marine Terminal 4 within the Portland Harbor Superfund Site, including the construction of a Confined Disposal Facility for some contaminated sediments. The project design is being reviewed and discussed by EPA and the Port. A public open house about the cleanup design will be scheduled later this year. EPA does not anticipate any work taking place in the river this summer.

Arkema

EPA is completing the draft work plan for the Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA). In April, EPA will share the work plan with Arkema's management group, Legacy Site Services. The plan will be available on the EPA website: ***http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/ph/arkema***

The work plan contains a schedule for completing the Arkema EE/CA, including the anticipated dates when the draft EE/CA report will be released for public review and comment. The EE/CA will describe several cleanup alternatives and will identify a preferred alternative.

Upland Updates

DEQ Source Control

The Oregon Department of Environmental (DEQ) is overseeing the work of nearly 50 potentially responsible parties (PRPs) who are investigating and evaluating upland sources of contamination to the Willamette River. Timely upland source control is important so that the river cleanup can proceed and river sediments are not recontaminated after they have been cleaned up. EPA and other state, federal, and tribal partners support DEQ in the source control work.

The December 2005 "*Joint Source Control Strategy*" (JSCS) establishes a regulatory and technical framework for guiding Portland Harbor source control work. The JSCS is available on DEQ's website at: ***http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/cu/nwr/PortlandHarbor/jointsource.htm***

The JSCS describes three pathways that allow contaminants to migrate from upland sources to the river: 1) overland runoff/bank erosion, 2) groundwater, and 3) storm water. DEQ's recent source control efforts focus on the storm water pathway. DEQ will control contamination from upland storm water discharges to Portland Harbor by:

- Step 1 – Screening storm water and storm water solids against screening levels established in the JSCS for the current year.
- Step 2 – Requiring the PRP to design and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) in 2007, to keep upland contamination from entering the storm water system.
- Step 3 – Monitoring the performance and effectiveness of the BMPs and/or conducting a loading evaluation to determine if contamination is reaching the river in storm water in 2007-2008.

Twice a year, DEQ produces the *Milestone Reports for Upland Source Control at the Portland Harbor Superfund Site*. This Milestone Report summarizes the status of DEQ's upland source control efforts, provides a basis for prioritizing sites and documents river-wide source control in Portland Harbor. Milestone Reports can be viewed at DEQ's Web page at: ***http://www.deq.state.or.us/nwr/PortlandHarbor/JSCS.htm***

For information contact Jim Anderson, DEQ Project Manager at *Anderson.jim@deq.state.or.us* or 503-229-6825.

USACE DMMP

Last winter, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Portland District, hosted a public scoping meeting to share information about the Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) for the Lower Willamette River and to listen to public comments and concerns. The scoping meeting is the first step in developing an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the DMMP.

The DMMP is a comprehensive, 20-year plan to manage material dredged from the Lower Willamette River federal navigation channel to provide safe navigation. The EIS will evaluate the potential impacts of reasonable alternatives for managing dredged material in a least-cost, technically feasible manner that meets all federal environmental standards.

One of the issues raised is how to coordinate dredging with EPA and DEQ to make sure people and the environment are adequately protected from exposure to contaminated sediment within the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The Corps will host future public meetings to provide updates and details regarding this project. For more information, contact USACE Project Manager Don Erickson at *Donald.L.Erickson@nwp01.usace.army.mil* or 503-808-4713.

Department of Human Services SHINE Program

The Oregon Public Health Division's SHINE (Superfund Health INvestigation and Education) Program evaluates the public health impact of contamination at hazardous waste sites and Superfund sites in Oregon. SHINE has released two public health assessment reports at Portland Harbor and conducted extensive outreach through community-based organizations to inform the public regarding the Portland Harbor fish advisory. SHINE's initial evaluation at Portland Harbor has focused on the health risks associated with eating fish from the area.

SHINE plans to look next at the public health impact posed by recreational use at Portland Harbor, which includes beach use, boating and swimming. **SHINE would like to hear from the community regarding concerns related to recreational use of this section of the river.** If you have questions or concerns regarding recreational use of the Portland Harbor that you would like to see addressed in SHINE's evaluation, please contact Kate Toepel, Health Assessor/Toxicologist, SHINE Program at *kathryn.toepel@state.or.us* or 503-731-4504.

CAG Corner

The Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group is a forum for concerned citizens to gather and learn more about the investigation and cleanup of Portland Harbor, also to provide feedback to EPA and DEQ. Everyone is welcome at the regular meetings, held on the second Wednesday of every month from 6-8 p.m. at the BES Water Lab, 6523 N. Burlington Avenue in St. Johns. For more information, contact CAG Education and Outreach Chairman, Robin Plance at 503-240-1923.

The CAG is broadly representative of the stakeholders affected by contamination in the Willamette River, and has members representing recreation, environmental, business and neighborhood concerns. The CAG is currently seeking volunteers to fill membership vacancies. If you are interested in participating in this group, interacting with and providing valuable feedback to EPA, DEQ and the LWG, and perhaps even sharing information with others, please contact Jeanne Longley at 503-286-2637.

In November 2006, Jeanne Longley accepted the role of Chairperson for the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group. Jeanne lives adjacent to the Portland Harbor Superfund site and has been active in many community issues. After four years of outstanding service, retiring CAG Chairman Robin Plance is taking on the leadership of the Education and Outreach Committee for the CAG.

For More Information

EPA Contacts for Portland Harbor:

Judy Smith, EPA Community Outreach and Public Information
smith.judy@epa.gov 503-326-6994

Chip Humphrey, EPA Project Manager – Harbor-wide Investigation
humphrey.chip@epa.gov 503-326-2678

Eric Blischke, EPA Project Manager – Harbor-wide Investigation
blischke.eric@epa.gov 503-326-4006

Kristine Koch, EPA Project Manager – Source Control
koch.kristine@epa.gov 206-553-6705

Sean Sheldrake, EPA Project Manager – Arkema, Terminal 4, GASCO Early Actions
sheldrake.sean@epa.gov 206-553-1220

Mark Ader, EPA Project Manager – Triangle Park, US Moorings Early Actions
ader.mark@epa.gov 206-553-1849

Additional information contacts and resources:

Jim Anderson, Department of Environmental Quality, Portland Harbor Program Manager
Anderson.jim@deq.state.or.us 503-229-6825

Resources on the Web:

EPA website: ***http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/ptldharbor***
DEQ website: ***http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/cu/nwr/PortlandHarbor/***

Visit an information repository:

Repositories are located at the following Multnomah County libraries:

St. Johns Branch Library
Reference Desk
7510 N. Charleston Avenue

Northwest Branch Library
Reference Desk
2300 NW Thurman Street

Central Library Government Documents
Reference Desk
801 SW 10th Avenue

(Get Information via e-mail. See back page.)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101-1128

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E-MAIL NEWS

You can now **get information by e-mail** about the Portland Harbor Superfund site, as well as the Columbia River, Brownfield's and other EPA activities and programs in northwest Oregon. Stay current with electronic fact sheets, newsletters, breaking news, website updates and public comment opportunity notices.

It just takes a few simple steps to add your name to the EPA-NWOregon listserv. To subscribe, send a blank message to: ***EPA-NWOregon-subscribe@lists.epa.gov***

After subscribing, you can send an e-mail to *smith.judy@epa.gov* asking to remove your name from the Portland Harbor paper mailing list. Thank you for helping to conserve resources!